



Archived Policy Statement

Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act (S. 306)

Comments on passage of the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act (S. 306) in the Senate

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Comments by Sharon F. Terry

We applaud the Senate for quickly passing the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2005. The Genetic Alliance is aware of hundreds of individuals, among its 14 million members, who wait for the day when this bill becomes law. We live with a profound understanding of the importance of genetics and genomics in medicine – and we know that it is not yet safe to make use of the tests and trials available today, let alone those that will become available in the future.

In a country founded on precepts that offer protections against discrimination, based on sex, race or religion, we certainly have room for perhaps the most basic factor of all – our genes, representative of both our shared inheritance and the essence of our diversity.

We are particularly grateful to Senator Frist for his leadership, to Senator Snowe for introducing S.306, to Senator Enzi for moving it through the HELP committee quickly, and to Senators Kennedy, Gregg, Harkin and Jeffords and their staffs, for all their work over many years.

Congress demonstrated extraordinary vision in funding the mapping of the human genome. It requires an equal measure of vision and courage to pass the legislation that makes it possible for people to benefit from the new tests and technologies and creates a safety net for healthcare consumers. Otherwise, the remarkable achievements of the Human Genome Project will be slow to translation to health applications.

We call on the House of Representatives to take up this bill and pass it, mindful that President Bush has issued a Statement of Administration Policy supporting this legislation. We look forward to this legislation encouraging the fruits of genomic research make a difference in the coming years.